

**JOINT STAFF REPORT
WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 3
Columbia River Compact
February 20, 2001**

Purpose: To review salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, and smelt stock status and consider commercial fishing seasons for salmon and smelt in the mainstem Columbia River.

TAC: This Fact Sheet was distributed to the TAC on February 20, 2001.

2001 MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- The Columbia River Fish Management Plan (CRFMP) expired on July 31, 1999, and the parties to *United States versus Oregon* are continuing re-negotiation discussions initiated in 1998.
- The states of Washington and Oregon, the four Columbia River treaty tribes, and the federal government have reached a tentative agreement for 2001 winter, spring, and summer fisheries.

Endangered Species Act (ESA)

- A Management Agreement is being drafted for spring chinook, summer chinook, and sockeye that includes a spring chinook harvest rate schedule for the next five years plus other elements for three years.
- The Management Agreement will include a conservation-based harvest schedule and will also include agreed-to production actions.
- The *United States versus Oregon* parties will work to renew a long term Columbia River Fish Management Plan over the next three years.
- Non-Indian fisheries for 2001 will be managed not to exceed a 2% impact rate on upriver spring chinook.
- Treaty Indian fisheries will be managed for a 13% impact rate on upriver spring chinook.
- The states' intent is to manage non-Indian winter/spring season fisheries in accordance with the table below.

<i>SUMMARY OF PROPOSED IMPACTS</i>			
<u>Chinook</u>		<u>Steelhead</u>	
Spring Snake River Wild	≤ 2%	Snake River Wild	≤ 2%
Spring Upper Columbia River Wild	≤ 2%	Upper Columbia River Wild	≤ 2%
Spring Lower Columbia River Wild	≤ 12%	Upper Columbia River Hatchery	≤ 6%
Spring Upper Willamette River Wild	≤ 10%	Middle Columbia River Wild	≤ 2%
Summer Snake River Wild	≤ 1%	Lower Columbia River Wild	≤ 2%
		Upper Willamette River Wild	≤ 2%
<u>Sockeye</u>		<u>Trout</u>	
Snake River Wild	≤ 1%	Coastal Cutthroat Wild	≤ 0.3%
		Bull Trout	0%

Willamette Spring Chinook Management

- ODFW completed the Fisheries Management and Evaluation Plan (FMEP) for Willamette spring chinook to comply with Section 4(d) of the ESA in February 2001. The FMEP limits freshwater fisheries to a 20% impact rate on Willamette wild spring chinook for 2001.
- NMFS has concurred with the FMEP as completed by ODFW.

NON-INDIAN FISHERIES

Smelt Fisheries

- Ongoing fisheries are being managed in accordance with the draft Joint State Management Plan which sets forth three fishing levels depending on relative annual abundance.
- A Level 1 commercial smelt fishery in the mainstem Columbia River was adopted at the December 18, 2000 Compact hearing.
- The adopted fishery consists of one 18-hour fishing period per week (3 AM-9 PM Wednesdays) and is scheduled to occur during January 1 - March 31, 2001.
- Migration conditions have been good with water temperatures exceeding 40°F since December 1, 2000.
- The Columbia River is unusually low and clear for this time of year with flow at Bonneville Dam exceeding 150 kcfs only once since January 1, 2001. During the last half of January and early February visibility at Tongue Point ranged between 63" and 97" and generally equaled or exceeded 5' at Bonneville Dam.
- Through the end of January effort and catch was very low.
- During the February 7 and 14 fishing periods catch rates increased dramatically with the vast majority of the catch occurring below Cathlamet. CPUE's of 1,000 on February 7 and 1,800 on February 14 are similar to those observed prior to 1994.
- To date a total of 61,000 pounds of smelt have been landed in the mainstem Columbia River which is similar to season total landings observed during 1986-1989.
- Washington tributaries are closed for commercial smelt fishing except for the Cowlitz River which is currently open for one 12-hour fishing period (3 PM Tuesday–3 AM Wednesday) during January 1 – March 31, 2001. Effort and catch have been very low to date.
- The Cowlitz River is also open to sport smelt fishing from 6 AM to 10 PM Saturdays during January 1-March 31, 2001. Effort and catch was very low prior to February 10. Effort increased during the February 10 fishing period but no catch was observed.
- Water temperature in the Cowlitz River on February 10 was 40°F and visibility was 36 inches.

<i>Joint Staff Recommendation</i>		
Expand currently adopted mainstem commercial fishery to include one additional 18-hour weekly fishery period as follows:		
Season:	3 AM - 9 PM Monday February 26	(18 hours)
	3 AM - 9 PM Monday March 5	(18 hours)
	3 AM - 9 PM Monday March 12	(18 hours)
	3 AM - 9 PM Monday March 19	(18 hours)
	3 AM - 9 PM Monday March 26	(18 hours)
Area:	Zones 1-5	
Gear:	Gill nets, dip nets, or trawls as per permanent regulations	
Participants:	Columbia River commercial fishers with appropriate licenses and legal gear.	

Rationale supporting the Joint Staff recommendation is as follows.

- ✓ Based on CPUE's during the last two fishing periods abundance clearly exceeds Level One.
- ✓ Proposed fishery is consistent with Level Two.
- ✓ An additional fishing period would provide more complete data concerning annual abundance.
- ✓ Modifying fishing periods based on in-season landings is part of the states in-season management strategy and was supported by commercial fishers attending a public meeting held on November 28, 2000.

Winter Commercial Sturgeon Season

- The following fishery was adopted at the December 18, 2000 Compact hearing.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
J A N U A R Y		Noon _____	6 PM		Noon _____	6 PM	
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	14	Noon _____	6 PM	17	Noon _____	6 PM	20
F E B	21	Noon _____	6 PM	24	Noon _____	6 PM	27
	28	29	30	31	1	2	3
	4	Noon _____	6 PM	7	Noon _____	6 PM	10

¹ Zones 1-5, sales of salmon and sturgeon allowed, 9" minimum and 9-3/4" maximum mesh size restrictions. Standard sanctuaries: Grays, Elokomín (A), Cowlitz, Kalama (A), Lewis (A), Washougal, & Sandy rivers.

- Fishery structure was based on 1998-2000 successful fisheries.

- Preseason catch expectations for this fishery were 1,500-2,500 white sturgeon and up to 50 spring chinook.
- Landings of 2,719 white sturgeon and 59 spring chinook are both similar to preseason expectations.
- During 2001 catch in Zones 1-3 increased in comparison to catch observed in previous fisheries.

Commercial Live Capture Spring Chinook Study

- Funding has been received from the Bonneville Power Administration through the Northwest Power Planning Council to conduct a study evaluating the use of live capture commercial fishing methods, primarily small mesh tooth nets, to catch spring chinook in the Columbia River.
- The study includes an "Experimental Gear Permit Fishery" intended to evaluate the effectiveness of 3½" to 4½" tooth nets in capturing spring chinook and evaluating immediate mortality rates within these mesh sizes.
- On Monday, February 12, 2001 a letter was mailed to all people holding a Columbia River gillnet permit for the purpose of soliciting participation in the permit fishery.
- Participation in the permit fishery will be limited to 20 boats and participants will be chosen by lottery if interest exceeds 20 boats.
- Participating fishers will be required to obtain an "Experimental Fisher Gear Permit" from the ODFW as described in ORS 635-006-0020 and will be required to adhere to all terms and conditions of the permit.

<i>"EXPERIMENTAL GEAR PERMIT FISHERY"</i>	
✓	Fishery could occur between April 23 and May 18. Exact times and dates will be included in individual permits. The fishery will consist of 3-4 fishing periods.
✓	Fishery to occur in Zones 1-5.
✓	Gear will be restricted to multi-strand or monofilament gill nets not exceeding 75 fathoms in length nor mesh size exceeding 4½". Nets will be hung in at a minimum of a 3 to 1 ratio.
✓	Fisher will be required to provide, at own expense, a recovery box built to ODFW/WDFW specifications. Recovery box will be required for use on all non-adipose-clipped salmon that appear to be lethargic or lifeless at capture.
✓	Fisher may retain only adipose-clipped salmon and all adipose-clipped salmon must be sold to a wholesale fish buyer.
✓	Fisher will be required to restrict the time duration of each fishing drift to 20 minutes or less and will be required to use two nets for comparative purposes.
✓	Fisher will be required to allow monitors onboard during fishing operations and fishers must follow directions of monitors.

- Impacts to listed species during the permit fishery will not exceed 0.5% on Snake River and upper Columbia River wild spring chinook and 0.3% on Willamette River wild spring chinook.
- In addition to the permit fishery the study will also use contracted test fishers to compare:
 - 1) the long-term survival rates of spring chinook captured with 3½" tooth nets and conventional gill nets, 2) to evaluate the effect of soak time on short-term survival of spring chinook captured with 3½" tooth nets and conventional gill nets, and 3) evaluate the effectiveness of a floating trap in capturing spring chinook.

Non-Indian Winter Commercial Salmon Season

<i>Joint Staff Recommendation</i>		
Adopt the following salmon fishing periods for the mainstem Columbia River:		
Season:	Noon Monday February 26 to 6 PM Tuesday February 27	(30 hours)
	Noon Thursday March 1 to 6 PM Friday March 2	(30 hours)
Area:	Mouth to Kelley Point (in effect since 1975).	
Sanctuaries:	Grays River, Gnat Creek, Elokomina-A, Abernathy Creek, Cowlitz River, Kalama-A, and Lewis-A sanctuaries are in place.	
Gear:	8" minimum and 9¾" maximum mesh size restrictions.	
Allowable Sales:	Salmon and sturgeon.	
Expected Catch:	3,000-4,000 spring chinook 100-200 white sturgeon	

- Fishery is structured similar to previous winter salmon gillnet fisheries.
- Allows access to spring chinook destined for the Willamette River while minimizing impacts on upriver spring chinook.
- Split fishing periods allow for fishery checkpoints between fishing periods and in-season modifications as needed.
- 8-inch minimum mesh size will effectively target spring chinook and limit impacts on listed steelhead.
- Impacts to listed species expected to remain within guidelines set forth in the 2001 Management Agreement and the Willamette Spring Chinook FMEP.
- Fishery will be managed for 6-7% impact on Willamette wild spring chinook and $\leq 0.5\%$ impact on upriver wild spring chinook which would result in an expected catch of 6,000 (including 4,000 Willamette stock) spring chinook based on preseason expectations.
- Joint Staff expects that a fishery consisting of three fishing periods could produce a catch of 6,000 spring chinook. An additional fishing period from noon Thursday February 22 to 6 PM Friday February 23 (30 hours) or additional fishing time during the week of March 5-9 could be adopted to achieve the 6,000 spring chinook catch expectation.

Mainstem Spring Chinook Sport Fishery

- The mainstem Columbia River from the mouth at Buoy 10 upstream to the I-5 Bridge is open to salmon angling during January 1 through March 31 under permanent regulations.
- The Joint Staff has developed the following options for the 2001 lower Columbia River spring chinook sport fishery.
- The fishery will be managed for a 1-2% impact on Willamette wild spring chinook and approximately a 0.7% impact on upriver wild spring chinook in 2001.

<i>Option One</i>	
Area:	Columbia River mouth to Bonneville Dam.
Dates:	Close effective March 12, fishery will reopen March 16.
Days Open:	Four days per week (Friday through Monday).
Catch Restrictions:	Adipose fin-clipped chinook salmon, adipose fin-clipped steelhead, and shad may retained. Non-adipose fin-clipped chinook salmon and steelhead must be released immediately unharmed.
Expected Duration:	Through end of April.
Expected Angler Trips:	100,000
Expected Catch:	28,000 chinook caught. 13,000-15,000 chinook retained.

Pros

- Re-establishes the historically most important month for salmon angling.
- Allows access to hatchery spring chinook while limiting impacts on listed stocks.
- Allows fishery to extend past the peak of the upriver run.
- Closed periods may allow for run size update prior to completion of the fishery.

Cons

- May increase congestion during open fishing days.
- Increased complication in regulations due to open and closed days.

<i>Option Two</i>	
Area:	Columbia River mouth to Bonneville Dam.
Dates:	Effective March 12
Days Open:	Seven days per week.
Catch Restrictions:	Adipose fin-clipped chinook salmon, adipose fin-clipped steelhead, and shad may retained. Non-adipose fin-clipped chinook salmon and steelhead must be released immediately unharmed.
Expected Duration:	Through mid-April.
Expected Angler Trips:	100,000
Expected Catch:	28,000 chinook caught. 13,000-15,000 chinook retained.

Pros

- Re-establishes part of the historically most important month for salmon angling.
- Allows access to hatchery spring chinook while limiting impacts on listed stocks.
- Maintains consistency with currently adopted Columbia River regulations and recently adopted regulations for the lower Willamette River.
- Increased days per week may reduce congestion in fishery.

Cons

- Fishery may close prior to the peak of upriver run passing through the fishery.
- Run size update may not be possible prior to close of the fishery.

<i>Option Three</i>	
Area:	Columbia River mouth to Bonneville Dam.
Dates:	Effective March 12
Days Open:	Seven days per week.
Catch Restrictions:	All chinook salmon, adipose fin-clipped steelhead, and shad may retained. Non-adipose fin-clipped steelhead must be released immediately unharmed.
Expected Duration:	Through end of March.
Expected Angler Trips:	40,000
Expected Catch:	7,000 chinook caught and kept.

Pros

- Similar to currently adopted regulations.
- Reduced complication in regulations due to lack of closed fishing period and catch restrictions.

Cons

- Does not re-establish the historically most important month for salmon angling.
- Fishery is not selective to catch of hatchery spring chinook.
- Closes fishery prior to majority of spring chinook entering the Columbia River.
- Does not allow access to large returns of hatchery upriver spring chinook.

August Commercial Sturgeon Season

- At the January 25, 2001 Compact hearing the following commercial fishing season was adopted.

<i>Adopted Season</i>	
Season:	7 PM Sunday Aug 5 to 7 AM Monday Aug 6 (12 hours).
Sanctuaries:	Grays River, Big Creek, Gnat Creek, and Elokommin-A sanctuaries are in place.
Area:	Mouth to Longview Bridge.
Gear:	9" minimum and 9-3/4" maximum mesh size restrictions.
Allowable Sales:	Sturgeon and salmon.
Expected Catch:	1,500-3,000 white sturgeon. 500-1,500 green sturgeon 300 chinook (<1 SRW)

- The Joint Staff is recommending the following modification to the previously adopted season.

<i>Joint Staff Recommendation</i>
Eliminate all previously adopted sanctuaries.

- Rationale is that sanctuaries are not necessary because few salmon are present in these areas during this time and a 9" minimum mesh size restriction is in place to protect steelhead.
- All impacts to ESA listed salmon landed will be accounted for during the fall management period.

TREATY INDIAN FISHERIES

Treaty Indian Sturgeon Setline Season

- The commercial sturgeon setline fishery was open from January 1-31, 2001 as per permanent Compact rules.
- Catch is typically low in this season with landings ranging between 51-103 white sturgeon during 1996-2000.
- For 2001, landings totaled 31 white sturgeon for the season.

Treaty Indian Winter Gillnet Season

- At the January 25, 2001 Compact hearing a winter gillnet season during February 1 - March 21, 2001 was adopted.
- During the first two weeks of this fishery an estimated 258 white sturgeon, 2 steelhead, and 6 walleye were landed.
- Including setline landings, a total of 289 white sturgeon have been landed to date which is similar to catches observed in 2000.
- To date pool specific white sturgeon catch estimates are 59 in Bonneville Pool, 207 in The Dalles Pool, and 23 in the John Day Pool.

Treaty Indian Spring Salmon Season

- The tribes may recommend salmon gill net season options.

NEXT COMPACT HEARING

- The Joint Staff recommends that the next Compact hearing be scheduled for 1 PM Friday, March 2, 2001 at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife headquarters Commission room, 2501 SW First Avenue, Portland, Oregon to review ongoing commercial seasons.
- The first fall season Compact hearing has been scheduled for 10 AM Friday August 17, 2001 at the Water Resources Education Center in Vancouver, Washington.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
 Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
 February 20, 2001